

CONFEREES VOTE ABM LIMITATION

Agree to Extend Safeguard
 Missile Defense to Only 2
 More Minuteman Bases

By JOHN W. FINNEY

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 24 —

The antiballistic missile debate in Congress was ended today with a decision to restrict the Safeguard sites that would protect of Minuteman, intercontinental missile bases.

A conference of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees agreed to reject the Administration's proposal — accepted by the House — to extend the Safeguard system to provide an area defense for the nation's population centers against a possible Communist Chinese attack.

Instead, in drafting a compromise military procurement bill, they decided to accept the Senate-passed version that authorized only two additional Safeguard sites that would provide terminal defense for Minuteman missile bases against a possible Soviet missile attack.

Authorized Bases

The decision fell short of the demands of the ABM opposition in the Senate, which was narrowly defeated in its effort to block any expansion of the Safeguard system, but it also represented a setback for the Administration, which had argued that a start on an anti-Chinese ABM system was essential for the nation's security. Two Safeguard sites have already been authorized—one at Malmstrom Air Force in Montana, the other at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota—for protection of Minuteman missile bases.

As its plan this year for ex-

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pancing the Safeguard system, the Administration had proposed construction of a third Safeguard site at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri and preliminary work on a fourth site at Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming. Both are Minuteman missile bases.

In addition, the Administration had proposed preliminary work on four other sites—in the Northwest, Michigan, New England, and the nation's capital—as a start on a 12-station anti-Chinese ABM system.

In providing \$1.3-billion for expansion of the Safeguard system, the conferees decided that ABM defenses should be limited to protection of the deterrent force of Minuteman missiles and thus approved only the additional sites at Whiteman and Warren Air Force Bases.

Funds for the Safeguard system were contained in a military procurement bill that provided the authorization for purchase of weapons and Pentagon research and development in the present fiscal year. **Compromise on Authorization**

The compromise reached by the conferees provided \$19.9-billion in authorization, about splitting the difference between the \$20.5-billion approved by the House and the \$19.2-billion passed by the Senate. The Administration had requested a \$20.6-billion authorization.

Now that the Senate and House Armed Services Committees have reached agreement, the compromise bill is certain to be approved by the House and Senate, thus establishing the pattern for expansion of the Safeguard system.

Right up until the conference, Senator John C. Stennis, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, reported that the Administration had been urging restoration of the four anti-Chinese sites.

As a minimum, the Administration had hoped the conferees would approve at least a site around the Capital on the ground that a likely agreement at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the Soviet Union would be one restricting ABM systems of protection of the "national command centers" of the two countries.

The compromise represented a victory for the Senate Armed Services Committee, which had rejected a start on an anti-Chinese system on the ground that there was "no compelling need" now for such a defense against Communist China.

Going along with its committee, the Senate approved only two additional sites at Whiteman and Warren Air Force Bases. The House had approved all the additional sites proposed by the Administration.

Funds for Naval Ships

While retreating on the ABM issue, the House Armed Services Committee prevailed on other projects that have been championed by its chairman, Representative L. Mendel Rivers, Democrat of South Carolina.

The compromise, for example, retained an extra \$435-million that had been inserted by the House committee for construction of four naval ships, including two nuclear-powered submarines.

The shipbuilding funds had not been requested by the Administration, but Senator Stennis explained that they were retained in the bill because the ships were on the Navy's "highest priority list" and were scheduled to be included in next year's budget.

At the same time, the conferees, following the Senate lead, deleted \$152-million to start construction on a third nuclear-powered carrier.

The rationale was that the authorization should not be granted until the Administration decided on the future size of the Navy's attack carrier force.

The conferees also reinserted \$30-million that had been deleted by the Senate for development of the so-called "international fighter"—a plane that would be particularly designed for sale or gift to foreign allies.

The conferees retained two Senate amendments that were sponsored by Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

One would provide that the "free world assistance funds" contained in the bill could not be used to support Thai or South Vietnamese troops fighting in support of the Governments of Cambodia or Laos.

At the same time, the conferees increased the funds which represents the military aid program for Southeast Asia from the \$2.5-billion requested by the Administration to \$2.8-billion on the ground that additional military assistance probably would be needed as American forces were withdrawn from Vietnam.

The other Fulbright amendment retained in the bill provides that the "overseas allowances" given to "free world forces" fighting in Vietnam can not exceed the rate of combat pay given to American troops.

The Fulbright amendment was offered after a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee determined that the United States was giving Thai and South Korean troops in Vietnam "overseas allowances" two and three times more than those received by American troops.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Conferees Limit ABM Expansion

By Spencer Rich
Washington Post Staff Writer

House-Senate conferees agreed yesterday to expand the Safeguard antiballistic missile system to two new sites to protect U.S. retaliatory missiles, but killed President Nixon's request for four additional sites to defend against Chinese nuclear attack.

The conferees also approved a provision by Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) authorizing unlimited arms credits for Israel—which can be used for aircraft, weapons and other equipment—for the next two years.

Both actions came as the conferees completed work on a \$19.9 billion compromise version of the defense procurement bill, authorizing spending for weapons systems, military hardware and aid to friendly countries in Southeast Asia.

Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) of the Senate Armed Services Committee said the final bill—which is \$700 million below the Nixon administration request—contains “no substitution or modification that in any way impairs the effectiveness of our military preparedness.”

Conferees adopted two Senate amendments limiting U.S. payments for what some senators had called the use of mercenaries from other Asian nations in combat areas of Indochina.

The conferees also settled a number of other controversial items. They dropped altogether a House-approved administration request for \$152 million for a start of procurement for a third nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

The Senate committee had shelved the carrier request.

The House position prevailed, however, on several other major weapons and hardware items.

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Stennis said the final bill would carry \$435 million in funds not requested by the Nixon administration for two nuclear submarines, a sub tender and a destroyer tender.

Stennis said these ships—put into the House bill by Armed Services Committee Chairman L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.)—were on the highest Navy priority list and would have been sought in Fiscal 1972 anyhow, so providing them now was only “a bite of the apple” for next year.

An “international freedom fighter” a single plane for use by Asian nations to effect the Nixon Doctrine, received \$30 million. Critics had said the plane could foment instead of helping resolve Asian disputes.

Other decisions: \$75 million for the B-1 advanced long-range bomber, restoration of the \$17.6 million cut by the Senate for the Cheyenne helicopter; \$138 million for work on a far-down-the-road advanced ballistic missile defense, and insistence that \$200 million provided for the highly controversial C-5A giant military cargo plane be used by Lockheed Aircraft Corp. only for that plane and not for any other activities even on defense contracts.

Crucial Southeast Asia amendments proposed by Sen. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) during the lengthy Senate debate on the bill were retained. Stennis said these included:

• An amendment barring the U.S. from financing, for Thai, Korean or other troops, overseas allowances that exceed those paid U.S. troops

there. Stennis said this would apply only for future U.S. agreements on financing, not to existing ones.

• An amendment barring U.S. funds to finance Vietnamese or Thai military operations on behalf of the Laotian or Cambodian governments. Stennis had accepted this “anti-mercenary” proposal on the floor.

Also in the final bill is a Senate amendment requiring detoxification of chemical-biological warfare agents before their disposal—a provision arising in part from the Army's difficulties last summer in disposing of leaky tanks of nerve gas that were finally dropped in the ocean.

The killing of the four additional “Chinese defense” ABM sites represented a victory for the Senate position. The Senate Armed Services Committee had rejected the four added sites, saying “no compelling need” exists for an area defense against China and citing technical flaws in the Safeguard system.

Instead, the committee approved money for additional work at Grand Forks, N.D., and Malmstrom, Mont., Air Force Bases, for which deployment was authorized last year, and for expansion of deployment to Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., and site preparation at Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. Deployment at each of these sites is to protect the U.S. land-based retaliatory missile force—not cities.

Critics of Safeguard, citing its technical problems and charging expanded deployment would escalate the arms race, attempted to kill even the limited expansion, but failed Aug. 12 on a 52-to-47 Senate vote.

The key administration argument was that expansion to two new sites would make clear to the Russians that they could not hope to overwhelm U.S. Minutemen and yet would not provoke them into thinking the United States was seeking a “first-strike” capability.

The contention that the President needed such a “bargaining chip” for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks probably assured the administration victory in the Aug. 12 vote.

Yesterday's decision in effect gives the administration its minimum chip and no more, though Stennis said the Pentagon had told the conferees it “wanted everything back” that had been cut.

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